

## APPENDIX C

### ACCURACY OF THE DATA

#### CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DATA

Every effort has been made to protect the confidentiality of the 1997 Republic of Palau Housing and Expenditures Survey data, and to make sure that published data do not disclose information about specific individuals, households, or housing units. The procedures are meant to increase the data user's ability to obtain census data, particularly for small areas and sub-population groups, while maintaining confidentiality of individual responses.

#### EDITING OF UNACCEPTABLE DATA

The objective of the processing operation was to produce a set of data that describes the population as clearly and accurately as possible. To meet this objective, questionnaires were reviewed and edited during field data collection operations by crew leaders for consistency, completeness, and acceptability. Questionnaires were also reviewed by census clerks in the census office for omissions, certain inconsistencies, and population coverage. For example, write-in entries such as *Don't know* or *NA* were considered unacceptable in certain quantities and/or in conjunction with other data omissions.

As a result of this review operation, a telephone or personal visit follow-up was made to obtain missing information. Potential coverage errors were included in the follow-up, as well as questionnaires with omissions or inconsistencies beyond the completeness and quality tolerances specified in the review procedures.

Subsequent to field operations, remaining incomplete or inconsistent information on the questionnaires was assigned using imputation procedures during the final automated edit of the collected data. Allocations, or computer assignments of acceptable data in place of unacceptable entries or blanks, were needed most often when an entry for a given item was lacking or when the information reported for a person or housing unit on that item was inconsistent with other information for that same person or housing unit. As in previous censuses, the general procedure for changing unacceptable entries was to assign an entry for a person or housing unit that was consistent with entries for persons or housing units with similar characteristics. The assignment of acceptable data in place of blanks or unacceptable entries enhanced the

usefulness of the data.

Another way to make corrections during the computer editing process is substitution. Substitution is the assignment of a full set of characteristics for a person or housing unit. Because of the detailed field operations, substitution was not needed for the 1997 Household Income and Expenditures Survey.

#### SOURCES OF ERRORS

In any large-scale statistical operation, such as the 1997 Household Income and Expenditures Survey of the Republic of Palau, human- and machine-related errors do occur. These errors are commonly referred to as non-sampling errors. Such errors include not enumerating every household or every person in the population, not obtaining all required information from the respondents, obtaining incorrect or inconsistent information, and recording information incorrectly. In addition, errors can occur during the field review of the enumerators' work, during clerical handling of the census questionnaires, or during the electronic processing of the questionnaires.

To reduce various types of non-sampling errors, a number of techniques were implemented during the planning, data collection, and data processing activities. Quality assurance methods were used throughout the data collection and processing phases of the census to improve the quality of the data.

